



# OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



October 21, 2021

Brian K. Williams, Executive Director  
County of Los Angeles  
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission  
World Trade Center  
350 South Figueroa Street, Suite 288  
Los Angeles, California 90071

Dear Mr. Williams:

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT'S PRESENCE AT COUNTY HEALTH FACILITIES

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) is in receipt of your September 29, 2021, request for additional information pertaining to the overall review of the LASD's hospital security operations.

On October 6, 2020, a deputy assigned to South Los Angeles Sheriff's Station was involved in a shooting at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. In response to this incident, the Civilian Oversight Commission reviewed the shooting and raised several questions regarding LASD's policies and procedures. They questioned the need for LASD services within the hospitals despite the fact that no County Services Bureau (CSB) personnel were involved in the shooting.

The information provided in the attachment and accompanying exhibits were compiled to provide understanding of LASD policies and procedures, along with the importance of having law enforcement services and building security available within a hospital setting.

The central goal for LASD is to build relationships with the community, patrons, and hospital staff to increase trust, credibility, and to solve complex challenges.

211 WEST TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

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Mr. Williams

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October 21, 2021

It is my hope the information provided proves helpful and solidifies the need to continue providing armed security at our hospitals.

In the event additional information is required, please contact Chief Laura E. Lecrivain, Countywide Services Division, at (213) 229-2101.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Villanueva', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ALEX VILLANUEVA  
SHERIFF

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(Countywide Services Division)

Attachments:

Attachment A: Response to questions raised by COC in their letter dated September 29, 2021

Exhibit A: Manual of Policy and Procedures sections; Field Operations Directive 16-003, *Calls for Service Involving Alleged Mentally Ill Persons*

Exhibit B: Hospital Manuals

Exhibit C: LAC+USC Medical Center Behavior Response Team policy

Exhibit D: CSB Crime and Arrest stats at County Hospitals

Exhibit E: CSB Use of Force 2020-2021

Exhibit F: Complaints involving LASD personnel at County Hospital/Care Settings 2020-2021

Exhibit G: Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Policy No. 451 – Outside Law Enforcement Agency Contact with Patients

**Response to Civilian Oversight Commission  
LASD Presence at County Health Facilities  
Letter Dated September 29, 2021**

**1. Provide policies for LASD interactions with patients and/or medical staff in the hospital setting.**

Department member interactions with the public are addressed in LASD's Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) and applicable Department of Health Services (DHS) policies such as Policy No. 451. Policies addressing reverence for human life, conduct towards others, professional conduct, and bias free policing are found throughout the MPP, and pertain to the type of interactions personnel would encounter in a hospital setting, including with members of the public who may be experiencing mental health issues.

County Services Bureau (CSB) deputies assigned to hospital campuses receive a hospital orientation manual at the time of assignment. The manuals provide guidelines by which hospital staff and LASD personnel work together in the hospital environment.

If any person is not satisfied with the services provided, there are protocols for a member of the public to file a complaint against a Department employee which may be investigated through a Watch Commander's Service Comment Report.

**2. Describe the impact that the removal of LASD deputies from hospitals providing security services would have in Los Angeles County.**

Each hospital maintains a relatively high volume of calls for service. In 2020, CSB personnel responded to 18,825 calls for service related to this contract.

<b>Calls for Service</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Olive View Medical Center	4,265	3,193	3,184	2,808	2,220
LAC+USC Medical Center	12,878	12,629	11,624	8,749	7,030
Harbor – UCLA Medical Center	17,441	13,907	9,506	7,857	7,312
MLK Community Hospital	2,888	1,215	1,382	1,149	1,020
Rancho Los Amigos	1,720	1,402	1,451	1,038	1,243

In the event CSB deputies were removed from the County hospitals, all policing services would default to the local policing agency in the affected jurisdiction as indicated in the table on the following page:

County Hospital	Default Service Provider
High Desert Medical Clinic	LASD – Palmdale Station
Olive View Medical Center	LAPD – Mission Station
LAC + USC Medical Center	LAPD – Hollenbeck Station
Harbor – UCLA Medical Center	LASD – Carson Station
MLK Community Hospital	LASD – Century Station
Rancho Los Amigos	Downey Police Department

Calls for service have the largest potential source of liability in regards to serious injury to patients, patrons, and medical staff. The ability for each of these policing agencies to assume the added calls for service within an appropriate response time would be in question.

Another unique aspect to the hospital environment are the “Code Gold” calls for service. A Code Gold is requested when an aggressive or self-destructive patient places themselves or others in imminent danger, or for a patient with mental health and behavioral response episodes. In 2020, CSB personnel responded to approximately 8,473 Code Gold calls. See Exhibit C on the LASD’s role when responding to assist hospital Behavior Response Teams when dealing with Code Gold calls.

The LASD develops and maintains organizational and countywide emergency and response procedures for handling security incidents, civil disturbances, situations involving VIPs and the media, and traffic control during security and emergency incidents. These procedures are applicable to the County hospitals. Procedures are also in place to manage infant abductions, active shooters, bomb threats, and hostage situations.

### **3. Describe the operation structure and operational challenges (responsibility, staffing, etc.).**

The operational structure for CSB’s hospital security deployment consists of three shifts (EM, AM, and PM). The staffing levels for each facility varies depending on the units contract and the activity level. Staffing consists of lieutenants, sergeants, deputies, security officers, professional staff, and Law Enforcement Technicians (LET). The LETs are responsible for receiving and dispatching calls for services (from the public and hospital staff) to deputy personnel for rapid response.

Deputies provide round-the-clock inner and outer perimeter patrol checks of the facility, author crime reports, and effect arrests as required by policy. Security officers provide roving patrol, work fixed security posts, and assist sworn personnel with calls for service. Sheriff’s personnel assigned to the contracted hospitals utilize a community-based policing concept when interacting with the public and staff.

A continuous security challenge within the hospitals involves the contracted staffing levels. Over a period of five years (2016-2021), CSB sworn personnel have responded to over 136,000 calls for service within the six contracted hospitals. The increase in



## Attachment A

mental health-related incidents has created the need for additional personnel to assist in de-escalating and mitigating unforeseen mental health incidents.

### **4. Describe the operation budget, including how much is received for the hospital security contract(s).**

The current DHS/LASD contract for the six County hospitals and associated clinics is approximately \$38 million. This contract includes 135 employees (69 sworn and 66 security officers).

The CSB maintains a daily deployment of 41 deputy sheriffs and 28 security officers at contracted hospitals and clinics. Each hospital has a contracted field sergeant per shift, a facility liaison sergeant, and two area service lieutenants who share supervisory responsibilities over the entire DHS contract.

### **5. Describe current County Services Bureau Inter-Departmental Contracts /Agreements with other County departments and/or operations related to health facility services.**

The LASD/CSB contracts exclusively with DHS for building security and law enforcement services for their six County hospitals and associated clinics. In addition to the DHS contract, CSB contracts and provides law enforcement and building security services to twenty-four (24) Department of Mental Health (DMH) facilities. These facilities provide mental illness case management, crisis intervention, counseling, rehabilitation, and other programs.

In 2019, DHS took over management of the security guard contract due to LASD's concerns over liability and training requirements. DHS contracts for approximately 253 unarmed security guards, and an additional 24 unarmed onsite supervisors.

### **6. Describe and provide operation statistical data that is maintained (Use of Force, Crimes, Complaints, etc.).**

The following table provides the number of Part I and Part II crimes documented per hospital.

<b>Part 1 / Part 2 Crimes</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
High Desert Medical Clinic	8/7	8/15	9/9	10/8	12/10
Olive View Medical Center	23/59	30/81	19/67	20/73	17/47
LAC+USC Medical Center	131/66	110/116	66/102	63/67	47/86
Harbor – UCLA Med Center	62/47	44/57	55/64	65/89	45/63
MLK Community Hospital	21/10	30/21	29/19	38/6	19/16
Rancho Los Amigos	4/7	18/12	13/7	17/7	9/7
<b>Annual Part 1 / Part 2 Total</b>	<b>249 / 196</b>	<b>240/302</b>	<b>191/268</b>	<b>213/250</b>	<b>149/229</b>
<b>All Crimes Total</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>378</b>

See Exhibit D for statistical data on crime and arrests. Statistical data regarding use of force and personnel complaints are addressed in questions numbers seven and eight.

**7. Provide statistics regarding the number of criminal reports taken by Sheriff's deputies as well as arrests made by and use of force incidents involving Sheriff personnel at Los Angeles County hospitals, including demographic information (if any).**

Data regarding the number of criminal reports authored by LASD personnel is addressed in question number six.

From January 2020 through August 2021, there were 44 use of force incidents recorded. The demographics of the individuals involved include the following:

- African American – 19
- Hispanic – 13
- White – 10
- Biracial – 1
- Other – 1

Exhibit E provides the date, location, and synopsis of the type of force used. During this time frame, there have been no shootings by CSB personnel.

**8. Provide individual complaints made by individuals arising out of contact with Sheriff's personnel at Los Angeles County hospitals and other care settings.**

Over a two-year period, eight complaints were generated by hospital staff, patients, or the public against LASD personnel assigned to the contracted hospitals and DMH. Seven complaints were generated by the public, and one complaint was made by a hospital staff employee. Exhibit F provides a summary of the complaints received.

**9. Describe the policies (including procedures, guidelines, and protocols) and changes that have been made, if any, within the past 5 years.**

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center recently authored Policy No. 451 which provides guidance to on-duty law enforcement personnel conducting business at a County hospital. This policy was enacted to enhance safety, service, and communication protocols, and to ensure law enforcement personnel have a greater understanding of hospital procedures, including procedures related to the Behavioral Response Team. See Exhibit G for the entire policy.

Once an officer checks in at the emergency room, a visiting badge is assigned and worn by the officer so they are easily identified by hospital staff while on campus. Upon their departure from the hospital, the badge is returned and the officer signs out. See Exhibit F for the policy.

## **10. Recommendations for improving the LASD Hospital Security Operations.**

The overall security at each of our contracted hospitals could be improved by:

- Increasing the deployment of personnel assigned to each facility to assist with the increase of mental health related incidents.
- Upgrading the camera surveillance systems at all hospitals and associated clinics.
- Issuing body worn cameras to CSB personnel (date pending).